

Radio Interview

ATLANTA JOURNAL EDITORIAL HOUR

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Questions by Wright Bryan.

Answers by Dr. H. B. Raffensperger, in charge of the zoological laboratory, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry.

Q. DR. RAFFENSPERGER, THE OPENING OF NEW PACKING HOUSES IN GEORGIA HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF PROFITABLE LIVESTOCK RAISING IN THIS STATE AND IN THE SOUTH GENERALLY. WE BELIEVE, FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE AND STUDY OF SWINE IN THE SOUTH, AND YOUR CONTACTS WITH THOSE IN OTHER FIELDS OF LIVESTOCK WORK, THAT YOU CAN TELL US MUCH ABOUT THIS INDUSTRY. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ITS FUTURE IN GEORGIA.

A. That is rather a large question, but I can say without any doubt that the industry will add to the income and the well-being of Georgia farmers if they will take advantage of the opportunities which are presenting themselves. Georgia is now producing about nineteen million dollars' worth of hogs each year. This is rather a fine showing for our state. It is interesting to note that the farm value per head has increased from about \$3.60 two years ago to \$7.60 this year. Some of this increase is due, I believe, to a better quality of hogs now being raised in this State. But there is much progress to be made, for Georgia is consuming more pork than she produces. Dean Chapman's figures show that we bring into this state each year the meat of approximately 1,400,000 hogs.

Q. YOU MEAN, DOCTOR, THAT THE PEOPLE OF GEORGIA EAT THE MEAT OF ABOUT 1,400,000 HOGS MORE THAN THE FARMS OF GEORGIA PRODUCE?

A. Yes sir! You can readily see the possibilities of the livestock industry in this state. If we produced only what we consume

in Georgia, there would be room for a great increase in swine production. The same thing is true of beef cattle, since the beef which we bring into this state exceeds by 250,000 cattle the amount produced in this state.

Q. SUPPOSE THE FARMER DOES RAISE MORE LIVESTOCK. IS THERE A MARKET FOR HIS PRODUCT?

A. Assuredly there is. Our largest meat packers have established plants in Georgia. There are five of these plants in the state now. They are located in Atlanta, Albany, Tifton, Moultrie, and Augusta. Their capacity is entirely ample to process all the livestock raised in Georgia, and a great deal more. They not only stand ready to buy the farmers' stock -- for cash -- but their continued existence depend entirely on the farmers' willingness to produce the raw material for them. They are banking on the growth of the livestock industry in this state. They are adding to the wealth of this state, and it is up to our farmers to justify their position by taking advantage of the opportunity which presents itself.

Q. IS IT NECESSARY FOR A FARMER TO ABANDON OTHER LINES OF ACTIVITY TO ENGAGE IN LIVESTOCK RAISING?

A. Not at all. The growing of livestock should be part of a general farm program, and the income from sale of stock will be added to the present farm income. It is an accepted fact that any farm program, to be well balanced, must be diversified.

The farmer must not confine all of his efforts to one crop, or to any one source of income. If he does -- and fails -- he loses his year's work. A diversified farm raises several different crops, looking first to supply the farmer's own table, and then to a surplus of cash crops for the market. Any well balanced farm program must include livestock, for livestock enriches the land, in addition to being a cash crop that can be turned into cash any day in the year.

Q. I CAN APPRECIATE THE TRUTH OF THIS, DOCTOR, FOR TODAY'S ATLANTA JOURNAL CARRIES ON THE FRONT PAGE AN ASSOCIATED PRESS DISPATCH FROM WASHINGTON SHOWING THAT THE INCOME OF GEORGIA FARMERS FROM SALE OF LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS WAS \$13,498,000 IN THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF THIS YEAR. THIS WAS A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF 1935 WHEN THE INCOME FROM LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS WAS \$11,641,000. APPARENTLY GEORGIA IS WELL SUITED FOR LIVESTOCK GROWING. IS THIS TRUE?

A. It certainly is. We have a long growing season. We can grow feed crops the year round. Because of the mild climate, our farmers do not need expensive buildings to house or shelter their livestock. You see, Mr. Bryan, raising feed crops every month in the year means that you do not have to harvest and store your crops to provide winter feed. You simply keep the animals in the field where they do their own harvesting. That cuts down overhead expense.

Q. DOCTOR, WE HAVE ALL HEARD OF THE RAZORBACK HOG OF SOUTH GEORGIA. TELL US ABOUT THIS ANIMAL.

A. Well, Mr. Bryan, the razorback hog may have been famous in the past, but at present he is disappearing, and he is not worth much on the market. The razorback, or we might say the native or common stock, is largely permitted to seek its own food. It seldom finds the proper food, does not put on much weight, and there is no demand on the market for this type of animal. Our farmers are finding this out and are turning to better hogs. You have read of the thousands of young pigs from the drought areas in the west that have been shipped into this state.

Our farmers are buying these young pigs to feed during the

next few months. Many farmers plan to keep some of them for brood stock as some of these pigs from the West are pure bred or have a large percentage of pure breeding.

Here in Georgia young pigs can be produced every month in the year; farmers can plan and feed so that their pigs will be farrowed in the spring and be ready for market in August and September when prices are highest.

Q. THE SO-CALL "PINEY WOODS" CATTLE STANDS IN JUST ABOUT THE SAME CLASS AS THE RAZORBACK HOG, DOESN'T HE, DR. RAFFENSPERGER?

A. Yes. The only way to improve any kind of livestock is to build up the breed of animals, and then develop the proper feed crops and pasturage that can be raised most cheaply, and at the same time will put the proper kind of nest on the animals.

Q. I UNDERSTAND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WITH ITS STAFF OF TECHNICAL WORKERS HAS BEEN MAKING INVESTIGATIONS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS IN SOUTH GEORGIA, SEEKING TO FIND A WAY IN WHICH THE FARMER CAN RAISE MORE AND BETTER HOGS. HAS THE WAY BEEN FOUND, DR. RAFFENSPERGER, AND WILL YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT IT? I'M SURE THE FARMERS WILL BE INTERESTED -- AND THE CITY PEOPLE MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED WHEN THEY HEAR YOU SAY THAT A PIG WANTS TO BE CLEAN.

A. Well for ten years the Department of Agriculture has had a laboratory at Moultrie, and through experimentation many interesting things have been discovered. What you say about a pig wanting to be a clean animal is true. Cleanliness counts, even with pigs.

I had planned to tell our audience about the technical studies we have made, but my farmer friends in South Georgia tell me to forget technical words and give them the plain everyday language.

It is true the south formerly suffered heavy losses in swine. When the hogs roamed the swamps, owners suffered great losses. The pigs did not have the proper food, the young pigs were killed, and the methods were not at all satisfactory.

Q. WELL, DOCTOR, WHAT DID YOUR DEPARTMENT DO ABOUT THIS?

A. We soon discovered that to raise hogs successfully in the south, we must keep them out of the swamps. The farmer must give his hogs good care and feed. He must keep them in a good pasture and feed them a balanced ration.

It has been proved time and time again that the farmer who puts his sow in a clean field - which means one that was previously cultivated, or a field in which hogs had not been fed during the previous year, will raise about a third more pigs out of a litter than he did by the old method. He does this because his losses are smaller.

Q. YOU MEAN, DR. RAFFENSPERGER, THAT THE FARMER WHO KEEPS HIS PIGS IN A CLEAN FIELD WILL RAISE A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF HIS PIGS TO MATURITY THAN THE FARMER WHO DOESN'T?

A. Exactly that! We call it the Swine Sanitation Plan because it means a clean place for pigs. And not only does the farmer raise more pigs in a clean field, but these pigs will make greater gains; they will grow much faster when fed a balanced ration.

We had an example of this at a hog show in Moultrie recently. I wish you could have been there. There were two pigs on display, side by side. They were exactly the same age, six months and ten days, and about the same breeding. But the one that roamed the swamps to find his feed weighed only FORTY POUNDS, while the other hog - we call him a sanitary hog - weighed TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY POUNDS.

The one was worth not only top market price, but weighed two hundred pounds more than the other, and can be sold readily, while there is practically no market demand for the poorer type animal.

Q. THAT IS MOST INTERESTING, BUT HOW COULD ONE WEIGH SO MUCH MORE WHEN THEY WERE THE SAME AGE?

A. It was the care of sow and litter during the suckling period that accounted for a great deal of the difference. Feed and management made up the rest. The little pig that weighed only 40 pounds had roamed the swamps, eating what it could find. It wasn't any trouble to its owners -- and of course, it wasn't worth much.

The hog that weighed 240 pounds had been raised in a clean field and, in addition to the pasture crop, had been fed a balanced ration, and had been given a mineral mixture of equal parts of ground limestone, salt, and bone meal.

It got off to a good start by being born in a clean field, and it was provided with the necessary feed and minerals to grow rapidly and produce good quality meat to command the highest market prices.

Q. BUT THE BIG HOG COST THE FARMER MORE, DIDN'T IT?

A. Yes, but not nearly so much as you might think. The farmer raises practically everything which he feeds this hog, and the farmer is a business man. He is willing to spend a few cents when he sees an opportunity to make a few dollars. This is what he did to get the big hog: He planned. He used good management. He invested a few dollars. And he got a much greater return -- more than enough to pay him for the things he did and the man with the forty-pound hog neglected to do.

Q. THIS IS MOST INTERESTING. BUT ARE THE FARMERS OF GEORGIA MAKING USE OF THIS METHOD WHICH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS OUTLINED?

A. Yes. There are a number of them using the plan with excellent results. More and more use it each year as they see what their neighbors are doing with it.

When every farmer in the Southeastern states has adopted this plan it will mean ^{millions} ~~millions~~ of dollars more for them. And our years of work will have accomplished what we set out to do.

The information also is being spread through the vocational agricultural student projects and through the 4-H Club work of the county agents. The state colleges of Agriculture and the state experiment farms also are following the Swine Sanitation Plan, and helping to pass it on to the farmers.

It does seem to me that through these different agencies the program of better swine raising practices, which of course will include sanitation, better breeding and feeding, will be extended in the next several years, and the swine industry placed on a sounder basis for more profitable pork production in the south.

Q. OUR FARM LISTENERS, NO DOUBT, WOULD LIKE MORE DETAILS OF THE PLANS YOU HAVE OUTLINED. DO YOU HAVE THE SWINE SANITATION SYSTEM DESCRIBED IN PRINT? SO THEY MIGHT GET A COPY?

A. Yes. We shall be glad to send a copy of leaflet Number 108. They may write to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for leaflet Number 108. It will be sent free of charge. Or they can write to me in care of this station, and I will see that a copy of this leaflet is mailed to them.

The United States Department of Agriculture and the state experiment station and extension services also have literature about beef cattle raising which should be valuable to those who wish to participate in building the great livestock industry in Georgia.